

# My Primary School is at the Museum

Inspiring schools and museums across the UK to build museum-school partnerships





This report is based on an evaluation of the project *My Primary School is at the Museum*, which was conceived by architect Wendy James and developed in collaboration with the School of Education, Communication & Society, King's College London with support from the Cultural Institute at King's. The project was realised through partnerships with Arbeia Roman Fort & Museum and Hadrian Primary School in South Shields; Tate Liverpool and Life Bank Nursery at Kensington Children's Centre in Liverpool; and the National Waterfront Museum and St Thomas Community Primary School in Swansea.

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# Forewords



*Deborah Bull  
Assistant Principal (London)  
King's College London*

Over recent years King's College London has developed its position at the interface between the needs of the cultural sector and the evidence, insight and academic analysis that can support cultural organisations in achieving their strategic aims and ambitions.

This project owes much of its success to one of those teams and, in particular, to my colleague Katherine Bond, Director of the Cultural Institute at King's College London. Her initial conversations with Wendy James, Sharon Heal, Alistair Brown and David Anderson were the genesis of the project, which has benefited from the academic support and advice of Dr Jennifer DeWitt and Dr Heather King in the School of Education, Communication & Society at King's.

*My Primary School is at the Museum* is a wonderful example of the King's approach, bringing together collaborators from higher education, the cultural sector and statutory education. This proved to be a powerful combination: in working together, a virtuous circle of 'giving and getting' was created – while all partners contributed to the project and were prepared to take significant professional risks, all have gained new knowledge, insight and developed professional practice in equal measure.

At a time when creativity, culture and the arts are at risk within the education system, with dramatic falls in the number of pupils taking GCSEs in arts related subjects – and in a climate where diversity and equality of access to culture remains a challenge – innovative approaches, such as this project embodies, are needed more than ever. The importance of its findings cannot be overestimated: the value of placing local cultural resources at the heart of children's education as well as the impact of providing daily access to local cultural resources for children, whatever their social, cultural or economic background. *My Primary School is at the Museum* offers some hope – perhaps even a partial solution – to a whole host of access, engagement, education and even economic challenges that the cultural sector currently faces.

*My Primary School is at the Museum* is a ground-breaking concept and delivering this pilot programme has required the dedication and commitment of a core team over a number of years. It was made possible by the openness, generosity of spirit, expertise and enthusiasm of the museum and school staff in South Shields, Liverpool and Swansea.

To them all, my heartfelt thanks and congratulations.



*David Anderson  
Director General  
Amgueddfa Cymru -  
National Museum Wales*

Two years ago, Wendy James, Garbers & James Architects, and Katherine Bond, Director, Cultural Institute, King's College London, met with Sharon Heal, Director, Museums Association, and me as its Chair, to discuss an extraordinary and innovative idea: that schools can share premises with museums and, if they do, the quality of children's learning will be enriched and enhanced.

I had worked with Wendy some years before, when she was one of the architects engaged to design a new Education Centre at the V&A, where I then worked. Sadly, the Centre was never built because the Museum's capital building priorities changed, but Wendy had been impressed by the exceptional educational potential of museums. She now wanted to apply her expertise as an architect in a wholly different way. Katherine saw the rich research potential of the project, and put the weight of King's behind it.

As a result of this meeting, Amgueddfa Cymru became an enthusiastic partner (together with another museum and an art gallery) in *My Primary School is at the Museum*.

In many ways this initiative provides an excellent example of the impacts learning in a museum can have on the aspirations and ambitions of some of our youngest visitors. It provides one successful model for working with primary schools, demonstrating beneficial outcomes for the children and their families. The positive impacts of learning in alternative kinesthetic environments through play are well established. It is interesting that the evidence of this report also highlights that the national curriculum can not only be satisfactorily delivered in a (local) museum setting but that this approach can have a positive effect on the children's confidence, language skills and ability to form friendships.

While the prospect of moving a primary school class into the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea for five weeks seemed quite a challenging one, it was actually quite a seamless process. Detailed planning between the staff at the museum and the teachers involved removed many of the perceived barriers. Programming dedicated family days also provided an opportunity to share the children's work with their families and alleviate any concerns on the part of the partners and guardians.

I would like to sincerely thank the Head Teacher, staff, governing body, children and families at St Thomas Community Primary School in Swansea for participating in this incredible initiative. I have no doubt it will be something which all the children and adults involved in the project will remember forever.

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# Executive summary

**A**t the heart of the *My Primary School is at the Museum* concept is a symbiotic strategy to place school classes within museums and galleries for extended periods, potentially leading to co-location. As the result of a feasibility study, and driven by a partnership between education, culture, business and academia, an innovative project was developed by King's College London to explore whether or not there could be a range of beneficial outcomes from this approach.

*My Primary School is at the Museum* was developed against a backdrop of threatened museum services, a shortage of school places, and ever growing evidence for a wide range of benefits of learning in cultural environments and through collections.

The project concept has synchronicity with many calls to action to bring the educational and cultural sectors closer together and for every child to have the right to participate in cultural learning. In the past, there have been a range of museum-school partnerships and some have cultivated deeper, longer term relationships. However this is the first time in the UK that school classes have been placed for extended residencies into museums.

## The partnerships

To pioneer the concept, three very different partnerships between schools and museums across the UK – in Swansea, Liverpool and South Shields – were created. Classes from two primary schools and a nursery moved into a museum or gallery for between two weeks and a term while continuing to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

## Impacts

Overall the project successfully developed momentum in testing the concept, demonstrating a range of impacts for all stakeholder groups.

### Children

Children proved themselves to be surprisingly adaptable to the new environment and stimuli. In particular, many became more confident and effective communicators, developing new social skills as a result of their extended stay in a public and adult-structured environment. They also enjoyed some memorable learning experiences. Their immersion in museum and gallery collections led to a growing enthusiasm for the opportunities that their local cultural organisations can offer.

### Museums

Museums and galleries developed a deeper understanding of formal education audiences, enabling them to create more relevant, engaging programmes tailored to particular age groups. They were also able to extend the use of their spaces and collections.

### Schools and teachers

Schools and teachers became more confident in using out-of-classroom resources and spaces for teaching. The more relaxed environment encouraged teachers to explore a greater range of resources, in creative ways, to deliver the curriculum. The projects also fostered deeper relationships between schools and parents, contributing to greater community cohesion.

### Key challenges

A number of issues prevented the partnerships functioning at full capacity. Not surprisingly, the school and museum staff initially had difficulty understanding

each other's different ways of working. Teachers were not familiar with the museum resources, while museums were not accustomed to hosting extended residencies, or delivering all aspects of the curriculum.

### Conclusions

The project served to highlight some of the most pertinent issues in the cultural and education sectors – embracing flexibility and creativity, exploiting local resources to the full – and put a spotlight on the potential of radical new ways of working.

New partnerships formed and there was a flow of skills, knowledge exchange and ways of working between the partner organisations. However, it was evident that if educational and cultural organisations are to work together in this way longer term, much closer communication and a better understanding of the different organisational cultures are required.

*My Primary School is at the Museum* demonstrates that the concept has real potential to significantly enhance cultural learning by building strong partnerships between local schools, local museums and local families, bringing many benefits to all.

The project illustrates the huge opportunity waiting to be grasped by both the education and cultural sectors to support our nation's children in becoming adaptable and culturally confident citizens of the future.

# Genesis of the project

**M**y Primary School is at the Museum tested the benefits of co-locating primary school classes for extended periods within a museum. The project originated from an idea conceived by architect Wendy James: to one day see the creation of a permanent museum-school. Although the scope of the current project did not seek to test this idea, Wendy continues to champion the vision of a purpose built museum primary school. Here, she tells us why.

The concept of *My Primary School is at the Museum* was born out of my 35 years' practice as an architect in the public cultural sector, specialising in museums and education. My observation was that an almost pattern book approach to school museum trips, which take place perhaps two or three times in a child's school career in this country, doesn't really add up to much given the richness of our national collections and the true value of our children in society. As an architect, I read of museum closures in parallel with 'grave shortages' of primary school places. As a mother of three, I see the joy and inspiration in learning that can and should occur for all in museum settings.

I know that primary schools are not necessarily that big physically, and so the idea of greater sharing and potentially co-locating such facilities occurred. The idea was triggered by a particular conversation I had when doing some strategic planning work around a much loved UK cathedral. I was brought up short when local parents were concerned at the lack of computer facilities and indoor sports facilities in the cathedral school. My brain couldn't get beyond, 'but you have ALL THIS, the most beautifully historic environment imaginable within acres and acres of open outdoor space.' I instantly felt, here you can learn Physics, Structures, Materials, Science, Geology, Art, Languages (dozens of nationalities visit annually, chattering in a panoply

of lyrical tongues), Ecology, Biology, Sustainability, Mathematics, Patterns, Citizenship (with a copy of the Magna Carta to hand), Sculpture and so on – actually, even History! Computers are two a penny around the corner, and these days outdoor games aren't the worst idea for health and wellbeing, are they?

This experience started my own personal reading around how children learn. I was particularly drawn to the value of haptic learning and also the art of employing visual thinking strategies. Before long I came across the Cultural Institute at King's College London through some associated lecturing I was doing on the university's 'Towards Tomorrow's Museum' course, based at Tate Modern, where I was also working as a consultant on their recent major extension project. With the Cultural Institute's backing and support, and in collaboration with the School of Education, Communication & Society at King's, we collectively developed the idea further and designed this series of proof-of-concept pilot studies.

With continuing belief, interest and nurturing, I hope that the project can now further develop and one day come to complete fruition in the establishment of the UK's first co-located museum primary school.

**“As a mother of three, I had additionally seen the joy and inspiration in learning that can and should occur for all in museum settings.”**



**“Children proved themselves to be surprisingly adaptable to the new environment and stimuli. In particular, many became more confident and effective communicators.”**

# Cultural education: the wider context

*Dr Jennifer De Witt and Dr Heather King  
School of Education, Communication & Society  
King's College London*





**"By working closely together, schools and cultural organisation have the potential to enhance student learning more than by operating in isolation."**

There is little doubt that cultural learning experiences can have a wide range of benefits for children. Broad acceptance of this general principle is reflected in the recommendations of policymakers and educators alike. For example, the culture secretary recently announced the pilot of a 'cultural citizens programme'<sup>1</sup> to give children increased access to the arts, whilst in October 2015, Arts Council England launched the Cultural Education Challenge calling for every child to have the opportunity to 'create, make and compose; visit, experience and critically review; and participate and contribute'. *The Cultural Education in England report*,<sup>2</sup> with its vision for cultural education in the future, called for arts practitioners to enter schools, and children to go out to places like museums and galleries. And as early as 2006, *The Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* sought to raise achievement by providing quality learning experiences in informal environments.<sup>3</sup>

However, while cultural learning is promoted as a key part of a broad and balanced education, and 'children should expect to be given a rich menu of cultural experiences',<sup>4</sup> evidence suggests that the education system does not prioritise cultural learning,<sup>5</sup> and that opportunities are not equally available for all children.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, research and evaluation studies point to multiple constraints facing schools, including the cost of transport, timetabling, staffing requirements, fit of such experiences to the curriculum, and performativity/testing pressures.<sup>7</sup> Cuts in funding for initiatives (such as the cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme in 2010) also limit the realisation of learning opportunities outside the classroom. Put simply,

although teachers value cultural learning, with many going to considerable lengths to offer such experiences to their students, they are inevitably hampered by systemic pressures that are outside of their control.<sup>8</sup>

A further challenge relates to the ways in which museums and other cultural organisations provide for their audiences. Increasingly, such institutions are striving to be more inclusive, but research suggests that many are ineffective in their efforts: visitor profiles remain skewed towards more socially privileged groups.<sup>9</sup> More positively, however, it has been found that when opportunities are designed to be more open and accessible, subsequent cultural engagement can lead to increases in children's self-confidence and self-esteem.<sup>10</sup>

The ample benefits of well-designed cultural learning experiences have been documented elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> however, it is important to note that such experiences do not operate in isolation. Recent theorisation around cultural learning/learning outside the classroom emphasises the way in which learning experiences should be seen as an ecosystem.<sup>12</sup> That is, schools, museums, galleries, residential trips, after-school clubs and so forth all contribute to a learner's experience and thus providers must share responsibility for a learner's education. The ecosystem perspective draws our attention to the way in which students (and their families) experience learning – not as discrete bits, but as a tapestry of interconnected experiences, in which each experience is influenced by what has come before and, in turn, influences what comes after. Learning is supported when various elements of the ecosystem are joined together purposefully – when different settings are

conscious of others and take into account the range of experiences visitors bring with them. The ecosystem analogy also highlights the way in which the removal of one component can be detrimental to the ultimate success of the child. In short, a lack of cultural learning experiences will negatively impact students' learning. But, by working closely together, schools and cultural organisations have the potential to enhance student learning more than by operating in isolation. Such complementary working is even more significant in the current economic climate when individual institutions are struggling with financial constraints and the sharing of resources makes considerable fiscal sense.

There have been many previous projects where museums and schools have worked closely together and there is some existing evidence for how long term engagements can impact children and young people and their communities. There are also a variety of different models of museum schools in existence world-wide (see Appendix for a list of these). *My Primary School is at the Museum*, however, explored the promise of something new – of what might happen when a class spends much of their time over an extended period in a museum setting.

For references see page 28.

# Vision and objectives



## Vision

In *My Primary School is at the Museum*, children are based within a museum or gallery for much of their learning, and subjects are explored in the context of an object, or selection of objects, from the collection. Teaching follows best primary education practice and delivers full core curriculum. Children reap the full benefit of their local museum and its collections through sustained proximity to them; a constant weave of reference from place, to object, to curriculum offers a qualitatively different experience from occasional museum visits.

## Overarching project objectives

1. To explore whether or not there could be beneficial outcomes for primary school children and their families if they attend primary school in a museum.
2. To test the hypothesis that the national curriculum can be satisfactorily delivered in a (local) museum setting.
3. To establish another model of museum service delivery and simultaneously begin to explore ways of working to support schools in a tough economic climate with limited resources.

A project feasibility study identified the following potential key performance indicators for *My Primary School is at the Museum*:

### Primary School

- Children's performance with regard to the National Curriculum including any significant differences between school-based and museum-based performance.
- Additional ease or support felt by the teacher in this environment.
- Level of happiness; contentment; inspiration felt by children.
- Additional benefits that the teacher finds available in a museum setting.
- Parents'/carers' assessment of benefits or otherwise of schooling within a museum setting.

### Museum

- Successful delivery of full core curriculum within the museum.
- Level of museum staff's confidence in *My Primary School is at the Museum* as a workable model.
- Extent to which museum staff identify benefits or otherwise of the extended residency model.

## Participating museum-school partnerships

The project feasibility study identified and brokered three sets of museum-school partnerships. Three very different partnerships were made up of six very different organisations, with a good geographic spread across England and Wales.

The participating educational institutions included two primary schools (one pilot focusing on Key Stage 1 and one on Key Stage 2) and one nursery (using the Early Years Foundation Stage). The cultural organisations included one national art gallery (art from 1500 to the present day), one national museum (primarily industrial and technological history) and one local authority museum (primarily archaeology).

The project enabled school classes to spend up to a term absorbed in the museum environment.

## The backdrop of cultural engagement in partnership areas

Each partnership did not exist in isolation but within a wider context of variable factors, such as local government policy, the local culture of partnership working between education and culture, the existing level of wider cultural engagement, and the richness of heritage assets in the area. Whilst much of the individual local context affected each pilot in some way, the project focused on the benefits of greater cultural engagement for primary school and nursery children, capitalising on their area's heritage assets.

**The project enabled school classes to spend up to a term absorbed in the museum environment.**





# My primary school is at: Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields

**A**t the Arbeia Roman Fort, a class of Year 5 children experienced a stimulating new learning environment. This wonderful heritage site became their ‘second classroom’ for three months, allowing them to discover and re-discover all of its treasures in new ways. The project brought Roman Britain to life for the children, and the class teacher was delighted to see their thirst for learning in all subjects grow. By the end of their stay, the children were confident enough to give parents and visitors guided tours of their new home. The whole school is now planning to use this valuable cultural asset much more. And the museum is keen to develop its relationships with more local schools and reach out to families who may never have visited.

# The Project

## How did the Arbeia Roman Fort inspire and enrich teaching and learning?

Discovering Arbeia's spaces and collections inspired teacher Stephanie Christie to look beyond the obvious link with history and dip into other subjects such as science and geography. She discovered a wealth of prompts for writing – the children became archaeologists, for example, digging up Roman artefacts and recording finds in their diaries. The class was also excited about posting their news on Twitter.

The children enjoyed spending more time outside than usual, exploring the archaeological remains. And their teacher responded with creativity, sending them on activities such as angle hunts with protractors and looking for Roman numerals as part of their maths lessons.

**“The creativity in the childrens' writing was phenomenal.”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher, Hadrian Primary School

## What was particularly memorable?

Immersing the children in the nitty gritty of daily life at a Roman fort, museum staff led some enjoyable role play. The children acted as slaves under the watchful eye of the commanding officer's wife, played by Arbeia Assistant Learning Officer Leslie Palanker-Jermyn. They learnt how to bake bread and concoct herbal remedies, made beds the Roman way and washed dirty nappies using Roman plumbing.

**“Every single morning they come into school and ask, ‘Are we going over to Arbeia?’”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher, Hadrian Primary School

## Benefits for the partners:

### Arbeia Roman Fort

The project has provided a solid foundation for building the museum's relationship with Hadrian Primary and for reaching out to other local schools. Overcoming the logistical challenges of the project provided an invaluable insight into how to fully exploit the fort's spaces so as to address aspects of the curriculum beyond its natural focus on history.

**“We've definitely discovered lots of new ways to utilise the space for teaching across a broad curriculum.”**

Leslie Palanker-Jermyn,  
Assistant Learning Officer, Arbeia

### Hadrian Primary School

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the class has enthused the whole school. Teachers are now thinking of Arbeia as a valuable and easily accessible teaching asset, as well as using the museum for staff training and meetings. The project has also impressed parents, who were excited to hear their children's news every day, resulting in stronger family links for the school.

**“The reaction from parents has been brilliant.”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher,  
Hadrian Primary School

### Children

For many children this was the first time they had visited the Arbeia Roman Fort. Opening their minds to this impressive piece of local history increased their thirst for learning. They even started to generate their own ideas for teaching sessions. Their enthusiasm came through when writing their diaries and updating social media, which developed their literacy skills and widened their vocabulary.

**“I don't actually like museums, but this one has been different. I think I will remember this forever.”**

Year 5 pupil, Hadrian Primary School

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months  
spent at  
Arbeia  
Roman Fort,  
January to  
March 2016

## Key Facts:

### Hadrian Primary School

The school prides itself on providing a warm and welcoming beginning to each child's journey of lifelong learning. Its location is one of geographical and historical significance, close to the River Tyne and the magnificent coastline, with the Arbeia Roman Fort on its doorstep.

### Arbeia Roman Fort & Museum

Built in AD 150, the Arbeia Roman Fort is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The fort once guarded the main sea route to Hadrian's Wall. Visitors can explore the excavated remains of the original fort and full-scale reconstructions of its buildings, including the commanding officer's house and a soldiers' barrack.

### The residency:

A Year 5 class of 29 pupils (aged nine and ten) and their class teacher spent three months – January to March 2016 – at the museum.

### School team:

Scott Brown, Head Teacher  
Stephanie Christie, Class Teacher  
Carly Clark, Teaching Assistant

### Museum team:

Geoff Woodward, Museum Manager  
Clare Smith, Learning Programmes Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums  
Virginia Wilkinson, Learning Officer, North & South Tyneside  
Leslie Palanker-Jermyn, Assistant Learning Officer

## What were the main challenges?

The idiosyncrasies of the museum's spaces meant it was difficult to teach subjects such as PE and ICT there. With the class having to attend school for some teaching sessions, registration and assemblies, planning and using time to the full at Arbeia was challenging. This experiment was a steep learning curve for the museum, which had to make adaptations, such as changing the acoustics in one of the teaching spaces.

**“They call it their second classroom.”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher,  
Hadrian Primary School



# My primary school is at: Tate Liverpool

**B**uilding on an established relationship, a community nursery located a group of its pre-school children in the Tate Liverpool gallery for two weeks. Both Tate and nursery staff were surprised at how quickly the children felt relaxed in their new surroundings and how well they behaved in the public spaces. The children started talking more and experimenting with their play. Nursery staff took away lots of fresh, creative ideas and the Tate team gained important insights into the way in which very young children engage with art and use gallery spaces.

**“We wanted them to have as much fun as possible and enjoy it, but feel safe and be comfortable and feel like they own these spaces.”**

Debbie Goldsmith, Learning Curator,  
Tate Liverpool

# The Project

## How did Tate Liverpool inspire and enrich teaching and learning?

Tate Liverpool's Early Years workshops usually last two hours. So the opportunity for the nursery children to spend most of their day there during the two-week project allowed the nursery practitioners and Tate staff to adopt a more relaxed, open-ended dynamic.

Based in the gallery's Clore Learning Centre, the children were encouraged to explore the gallery's resources, moving from one space to another, to develop their interests. The project's Curriculum Lead, a specialist arts practitioner, created a large visual 'discovery tree' on the wall to map the children's interests, linking them to collections and other resources that children brought with them, such as toys, dolls and paintings. She added each activity to the tree so that by the end of the project it showed how each child's interests had been explored and developed.

During the play sessions children could choose from a wide variety of materials such as clay, sand, paints, string and straws and toys such as wooden blocks, toy animals, dolls and tea sets.

**“We had a ‘wow moment’ today. One of the children spoke to another child for the first time.”**

Marie Harper, Acting Manager, Life Bank Nursery

## What was particularly memorable?

The children liked being able to choose their own lunch from the gallery café menu. The simple experience of picking their own meal and eating with a knife and fork helped the children to feel independent and confident in their abilities.

The children enjoyed the hands-on activities in the Art Gym exhibition, which included printmaking, creating origami shapes and playing with drawing machines. They enjoyed dancing and mixing with other gallery visitors. Nursery staff also took away lots of new ideas for activities.

**“This project was much more exploratory and child-led. What they were interested in wasn't always what I would have picked out.”**

Katy McCall, Learning Curator, Tate Liverpool

## Benefits for the partners:

### Tate Liverpool

The residency provided an opportunity to observe how very young children access the collection over an extended period. The project was enthusiastically received and supported by staff throughout the gallery, including the security team. Tate is now investigating the possibility of future school residencies across the organisation.

**“Our vision is really about co-design, co-creation and co-production. So *My Primary School is at the Museum* is a fantastic way of testing that out.”**

Lindsey Fryer, Head of Learning, Tate Liverpool

### Life Bank Nursery

Nursery practitioners were able to test out ideas in a new environment with the support of experienced facilitators. The residency inspired staff to transfer ideas explored in the gallery back to the nursery setting, including creating a 'mini-Tate'. They were delighted with the enthusiastic support for the project from parents.

### Children

The experience had great impact. The children developed new friendships and increased their confidence in speaking, especially in group discussions. They showed greater independence, and the variety of materials and activities allowed their imaginations to flourish.

**“The parents were thrilled that their kids were part of this project.”**

Katy McCall, Learning Curator, Tate Liverpool

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**weeks spent at Tate Liverpool, 29 February to 11 March 2016**

## Key Facts:

### Life Bank Nursery at Kensington Children's Centre

Life Bank Nursery delivers quality childcare within the early years foundation stage for children aged six months to five years. The nursery provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment, with learning through play and challenging activities. It offers a full and constantly evolving programme that includes regular visits to cultural organisations, including Tate Liverpool.

### Tate Liverpool

Housed in a converted warehouse within the Albert Dock on Liverpool's waterfront, Tate Liverpool attracts around 600,000 visits a year. The gallery hosts a diverse exhibitions and events programme while displaying work from its national collection of British art from 1500 to the present day, as well as international modern art.

### The residency:

Between 29 February and 11 March 2016 a class of 24 pre-school nursery children aged three and four were based in the art gallery.

### Nursery team:

Lyn Carey, Centre Manager  
Marie Harper, Acting Manager  
Lorraine Jones, Nursery Manager  
Roslyn Murphy, Nursery Practitioner  
Denise Wright, Curriculum Lead and Artist

### Museum team:

Lindsey Fryer, Head of Learning  
Deborah Riding, Programme Manager for Children & Young People  
Katy McCall and Debbie Goldsmith, Learning Curators

## What were the main challenges?

Resources at Tate Liverpool meant it was a challenge finding the space to house a two-week residency for a class of nursery children, which also had an impact on access for other groups using the museum. Extra staff could have relieved the pressure on the adults supervising activities.



# My primary school is at: National Waterfront Museum, Swansea

**A**n outward-looking primary school joined forces with a popular museum on Swansea's scenic waterfront to offer its youngest pupils a memorable five weeks of activities. Two sequential residencies were held during this partnership, with two different classes and sets of teachers. Brimming with enthusiasm for their new home, the children became more independent and confident. Unusual artefacts fired their imaginations, especially the hundred-year-old monoplane hanging from the ceiling, and the beautiful setting encouraged them to explore the rich marine life on their doorstep. A surprising and rewarding discovery for both partners was the way in which the four- and five-year-olds engaged with the collections. Museum staff gained an invaluable insight into tailoring activities for this important age group.

# The Project

## How did the National Waterfront Museum inspire and enrich teaching and learning?

The children had plenty of time to explore eye-catching historical artefacts – such as a nineteenth century coal wagon and a replica of the world's first steam locomotive – together with high-tech displays, as they uncovered their country's industrial heritage. Being able to revisit favourite items helped them retain a surprising amount of information.

Class teachers designed sessions around activities offered by the museum. The link with the sea was a popular theme. A team of marine biologists from Swansea University brought fish, snails and crabs from their trawl and encouraged the children to handle and talk about them. The whole class dressed up as pirates, working with an actor who talked to them about the marina, boats and life at sea.

**“ You could see the benefits of them reading words on displays, talking about exhibitions whilst learning about their heritage.”**

Laura Luxton, Teacher,  
St Thomas Primary School

## What was particularly memorable?

The Robin Goch monoplane hanging from the ceiling in one of the museum's atria became a favourite with the children. A costumed interpreter playing the role of the plane's builder, Charles Horace Watkins, told the fable of Icarus, touching on the science of flight and aircraft design. This session sparked the children's imaginations and encouraged them to come back to the Robin Goch again and again to develop their ideas.

**“ The Robin Goch has had a huge impact on the children.”**

Laura Luxton, Teacher,  
St Thomas Primary School

## Benefits for the partners

National Waterfront Museum Catering for a lively and enthusiastic group of reception children for five weeks inspired the education team to experiment more by using different museum spaces for example. Despite some initial concerns about hosting four- and five-year-olds, staff were delighted with how the children engaged with the collections and now feel more confident about tailoring events for younger learners. The museum aims to build on its strong partnership with the school and encourage children to return with their families during holidays. This partnership benefited from the transfer of knowledge between the first and second residencies.

**“ It has added to our practice in trying to make our sessions more participative and memorable for every audience.”**

Leisa Bryant, Senior Learning, Participation & Interpretation Officer, National Waterfront Museum

### St Thomas Community Primary School

Teaching the curriculum outside of the classroom developed the teachers' creativity and confidence. They exploited the children's fascination with the artefacts, using displays to look for high frequency words and to do counting and number work. The extended stay allowed them to explore the museum in much greater depth and work closely with learning staff to experiment with different themes and activities.

### Children

Teachers noticed that children who spoke little at school were talking a lot more at the museum. Stimulated by the collections, children started to use new vocabulary, especially those who spoke English as an additional language. As they met more adults and talked to members of the public, their social skills blossomed. They also became more independent in organising and preparing themselves each day.

## What were the main challenges?

The intensity of this experience, together with travelling to and from the school at the start and end of each day, was very tiring for the children. This resulted in increased illness and lower attendance for the first

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## 5-week pilots at National Waterfront Museum, between February and June 2016

## Key Facts:

### St Thomas Community Primary School

Located in the east of Swansea, St Thomas has over 350 pupils. It nurtures close links with parents, families and the community, offering facilities such as a library, community rooms and a multi-purpose hall, all used by local groups.

### National Waterfront Museum

Housed in an original waterfront warehouse linked to a new, ultra-modern slate and glass building, this museum tells the story of Welsh industry and maritime heritage. Its cutting-edge, interactive technology and more traditional displays are popular with schools. Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales is the largest provider of learning outside the classroom in Wales.

### The residency:

Two reception classes – a total of 51 children, aged four and five – were located in the museum in two phases from February to March and May to June 2016.

### School team:

Russell Dwyer, Head Teacher; Andrew Burns, Deputy Head Teacher; Laura Luxton, Teacher; Claire Stallwood, Teacher; Lisa Brain, Laura Goulding, Molly Griffiths and Kelly Otteson, Teaching Assistants

### Museum team:

Rosalyn Gee, Learning, Participation & Interpretation Manager  
Leisa Bryant, Senior Learning, Participation & Interpretation Officer

group; however, by the second group attendance was significantly up. For the teachers, working without the usual school tools – such as interactive whiteboards – was particularly challenging, until they had settled into their new environment.

**“ We saw children who had barely spoken in school become animated and vocal, challenging themselves, communicating with their peers and displaying such a fabulous range of emotions.”**

Laura Luxton, Teacher,  
St Thomas Primary School

# How did the museums benefit from the project?

The museums were buzzing with life outside of their usual busy times throughout this project. And as a result of developing stronger partnerships with schools, they learned more about how to tailor activities to the curriculum and how to cater for specific age groups. Crucially, each of the participating museums raised their profile within their local communities and with local families.

## Enhanced understanding of the needs of different age groups

The two museums and the gallery all reported major benefits from hosting school children for an extended period rather than the usual day trip. Seeing the children and talking to their teachers every day gave museum staff invaluable feedback on the impact of their collections on young visitors.

This project offered the rare opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the needs of particular age groups. For example, after some initial doubts about hosting four-year-olds, Swansea's National Waterfront Museum commented that the pilot highlighted how much reception age children benefit from engaging with their collections. This experience will feed into how the museum develops exhibitions and activities for this age group in the future.

### Outcome:

- The knowledge gained from the project will support the museums' development of more targeted educational programmes that meet the needs and abilities of particular age groups.

**“ I think initially we were probably also a little bit sceptical about four-year-olds coming into the museum, but actually their engagement has been fantastic and they have just taken to it.”**

Leisa Bryant, Senior Learning, Participation & Interpretation Officer, National Waterfront Museum



## The opportunity to realise the full potential of museum spaces

Hosting a school group for a whole day over several weeks presented major practical challenges for the museums. They had to find additional dedicated educational spaces to host the children for longer than the usual day trip. Staff also had to think about providing children with easy access to toilets and outside play spaces, while ensuring child protection procedures were in place. And for lunches, they also needed to consider offering child-friendly hot meals. The partner museums rose to the challenge, gaining confidence by overcoming initial logistical concerns and using spaces more flexibly.

Every museum has its quiet periods – during weekdays, outside holidays – and the school groups contributed to these spaces being used more outside of peak times. The Arbeia Roman Fort project, for example, was delivered over a period of months when the museum is normally closed to the public.

### Outcomes:

- Managing logistical challenges led to more creative use of space.
- Locating classes in the museums enhanced their vitality and activity outside of the usual busy periods.



**“...to have children in the building every day over two weeks, gave us a real opportunity to get every department involved, and every department supportive and understanding how they can contribute to an extended school residency.”**

Lindsey Fryer, Head of Learning, Tate Liverpool

### Professional development for museum staff

The opportunity to observe the children's growing confidence and skills over an extended period was an invaluable professional development experience for museum staff.

As a result of working closely with teachers, education teams gained a better understanding of how literacy and numeracy are taught in schools as well as how to provide cross-curricular activities. By observing teachers in action, staff also learnt effective group management techniques, for example, how to keep children attentive during discussions and activities.

In fact, seeing children coming into their museums every day was a major benefit for staff working across these organisations, not just the education teams. They acquired a better understanding of the role of educational programmes and some, including a security guard at Tate Liverpool, were able to contribute to the sessions.

#### Outcomes:

- Museum education teams gained updated knowledge of the national curriculum, ideas for cross-curricular activities, and an insight into effective group management techniques.
- Members of staff working in different roles throughout the museums became more informed about the education teams and their work with schools.

### Higher profile in the local community

Seeing how much their children enjoyed their extended visit changed parents' perceptions of their local museum. Some had never visited, didn't know what was in the museum and thought it was not for them. Following the residency, they demonstrated a more positive attitude, seeing the museum as 'for us' and recognising that it could become part of their regular family life.

Parents have been empowered to act as advocates for local museums, spreading the message about their benefits to family, friends and neighbours.

The project provided cultural organisations with the ideal opportunity to embed themselves in the fabric of their communities and contribute to family life and wellbeing. It demonstrated the potential for museums and galleries to foster greater community cohesion and pride in local amenities.

#### Outcome:

- Families and communities gained a greater awareness of the value of their local museums and galleries.

# How did children and schools benefit from the project?

**T**here is no doubt that teaching the core curriculum outside of the usual classroom environment is a daunting prospect. But the chance to overcome practical obstacles and experiment with new approaches boosted the confidence of both the teachers and children involved in this project. Teachers who led the programme acquired a greater appreciation of how museums can be used for learning and are sharing this message with their colleagues. They saw how the project benefited the children's social and speaking skills and fostered an enthusiasm for their local culture and heritage.

## A greater appreciation of museums as places for learning across the wider curriculum and for younger age groups

Teaching core curriculum subjects in a museum space has helped to change teachers' perceptions that museums are primarily places for teaching history.

Inspired by the unique setting at the Arbeia Roman Fort, the class teacher moved beyond the obvious focus on history to teach elements of geography, maths and science. She also enjoyed using the fort's fascinating archaeological remains as prompts for the children's writing.

Teachers and museum staff discovered that museum learning can be relevant to much younger age groups than previously anticipated. More trips are being planned for younger age groups at St Thomas Community Primary School, and Life Bank Nursery are delighted that their three-year-old nursery children responded so well to their stay at Tate Liverpool.

Teachers of all age groups within the participating schools are now planning to develop new teaching and learning experiences with their local museum.

### Outcomes:

- Schools have been encouraged to think more creatively about the ways in which local cultural organisations can enhance the wider curriculum, beyond the obvious links with history.
- They are seeing the benefits of cultural visits and projects for younger age groups.

**“As a result of this project the school now has greater links with Arbeia. We have had a staff training meeting to link it with the curriculum, and everyone is using the resource so every child will now visit.”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher,  
Hadrian Primary School

## Enhanced confidence in teaching practice

Having overcome initial logistical and safeguarding concerns, teachers felt more confident. They reported that being able to experience the museum environment over an extended period generated opportunities for adopting exciting new ways of working.

Teachers also gained confidence in working outside of the more familiar classroom environment and could see that children benefited from the broader range of dynamic, hands-on activities available in the museum setting.

### Outcomes:

- Teachers have become more confident about thinking outside the box in how they deliver curriculum subjects.
- There is a new enthusiasm for enriching normal classroom learning with activities inspired by out-of-classroom settings.

**Following the success of the pirate day at the National Waterfront Museum, St Thomas has added more costume days to their curriculum.**

## Better relationships with parents and families

At home children were keen to tell their parents and siblings about what they had been doing in their museum. The new environment and the opportunity to spend so much time there provided the impetus for rewarding family discussions. Parents felt better informed and were keen to become more involved in their children's learning.

During the Swansea pilot, for example, parents came into class before and after school more often to chat to teachers. They commented on the success of the project and how their children had never spoken so much about school at home.

Many parents dipped into social media for the first time, using Twitter to find out what their children were doing at the National Waterfront Museum and at the Arbeia Roman Fort.

### Outcome:

- Schools are building on their relationships with parents who are keen to become more engaged in their children's educational experience.

## Children's increased enthusiasm for learning

The stimulation and challenge of a new environment fostered an increased thirst for learning. As a result, teachers perceived improvements in key skills such as critical thinking and evaluating evidence which they could build on as the project progressed.

During the Arbeia project, for example, the class teacher noticed the increased enthusiasm and engagement of children who took ownership of the project and enjoyed coming up with their own ideas for sessions.

Crucially, the new setting also helped to ensure an equal experience for all children whatever their ability, including those with English as a second language.

### Outcome:

- As they developed new skills and gained in confidence, children became more enthusiastic and keen to take control of their learning.

## Development of the children's social and communication skills

Teachers noticed improvements in the speech of the younger children in the Liverpool and Swansea projects, especially for those who speak English as a second or third language. The children became more confident in talking to adults, even benefiting from the regular bus journey and greeting the security guard each morning.

Interacting with gallery and museum visitors also had a positive impact on the children's social skills. They developed a better understanding of social etiquette, such as holding doors open for people. And family-style dining arrangements, with the teachers eating at the same table as the children, improved their table manners and eating habits.

### Outcome:

- The social setting of the museums and their adult-orientated structures fostered oral and social skills, resulting in marked improvements for the younger children.

**At St Thomas Community Primary in Swansea, parents and grandparents started up their own Twitter accounts to track the progress of their children and grandchildren, making them feel more included in their learning.**

**“ It’s about the children taking ownership of their learning more, and being more enthusiastic and engaged.”**

Stephanie Christie, Teacher,  
Hadrian Primary School

**“ They’re more confident, they’re more independent, they’ve got a better social etiquette with the public.”**

Laura Luxton, Teacher, St Thomas Community Primary School



# Practical recommendations

The following practical recommendations for museums and schools arise from the learning and knowledge generated throughout the course of the *My Primary School is at the Museum* project.

## 1 Provide training in the use of collections and fully exploiting the museum environment

The entire museum infrastructure offers a wealth of opportunities for teaching the whole national curriculum. Training in how to maximise cross-curricular learning, using not only the collections but also the physical building, behind-the-scenes storage, shop and café facilities and external spaces, is recommended for schools and museums.

**The entire museum infrastructure offers a wealth of opportunities for teaching the whole national curriculum.**

## 2 Develop bespoke resources for literacy skills

As well as improving children's oral communication skills, extended residencies can develop their literacy skills. Bespoke resources for literacy skills, drawing on museum objects, should be developed.

## 3 Co-create educational experiences

With teachers and museum staff working collaboratively, extended residencies offer opportunities for deeper engagement and for involving children in co-creating learning experiences. The possibility for co-created education experiences should be supported and facilitated.

## 4 Engage all museum staff in educational visits

From front of house and security to curatorial departments, all museum staff can play an important part in an extended residency. To increase support from teams across the organisation, training and briefings should be organised so that all staff are clear about their contribution and the value of such experiences for children – helping them to appreciate how their learning applies in practice.

## 5 Ensure understanding of different organisational cultures

Extended residencies require both schools and museums to understand each other's organisational cultures and ways of working. Museum and school staff briefings and regular meetings throughout a museum-school residency are essential.

## 6 Explore the use of outdoor spaces

When planning a residency, staff should consider the most effective use of the museum's external spaces, as well as internal spaces, in order to provide children with access to outdoor play and outdoor learning.

# Policy recommendations

**M**y Primary School is at the Museum has illuminated a wealth of educational, social and cultural benefits for delivering formal education in museums over extended periods. Leaders in both the education and cultural sectors should now take action to promote this kind of partnership.

## 1 Support extended school residencies in cultural settings

The project has shown that offering a whole class an extended immersion in the world of a museum or gallery is a powerful tool that delivers an enhanced educational experience and wider community benefits.

Schools should be supported in embedding their students' educational experience in their local museums and cultural or heritage organisations. Ideally, all school children in the UK should benefit from an extended cultural residency.

## 2 Disseminate the evidence for using cultural resources in education

There is a large body of robust evidence showing the benefits of out-of-the-classroom learning, but many education and museum staff are currently unfamiliar with this research. Key evidence should be collated and disseminated across the education and museum/heritage sector to support education and museum staff when advocating for partnerships such as *My Primary School is at the Museum*.

## 3 Provide specialist training for teaching in museums, heritage and cultural organisations

School teachers have no formal requirement to work with wider community organisations and although teacher training courses cover aspects of using out-of-school resources, logistical constraints often make it difficult for teachers to develop this practice.

Extended residencies could provide a welcome mid-career boost to the teaching profession. Having senior teachers on board would give these cultural partnerships the stamp of approval needed to maintain their momentum in the future.

## 4 Create a practical toolkit

There are a multitude of practical ideas resulting from *My Primary School is at the Museum* that could be collated within a useful toolkit for organisations interested in setting up extended museum residencies. The toolkit could cover a range of practical issues – such as using physical spaces, safeguarding, evaluation – and include case studies and teaching plans for delivering the national curriculum in a museum.

## 5 Enrich education by exploring ideas and partnerships more widely

Immersion in a new environment and enjoying memorable experiences were important aspects of the project that enriched the children's education and generated a new thirst for learning. *My Primary School is at the Museum* is an inspiration for schools to exchange ideas, share resources and develop partnerships more widely throughout their communities.

## 6 Develop networks to share best practice

Armed with the evidence of the project's wide-ranging benefits, leaders in both sectors should encourage professionals to explore cooperative working in greater depth and share best practice outside of their specialist fields. Growing professional networks in local communities could help to raise the profile of the museum-school concept and spread the initiative across the UK.

# Final reflections

*Katherine Bond  
Director, Cultural Institute  
King's College London*

When the Cultural Institute embarked on *My Primary School is at the Museum* I hoped that it would have significance and reach. But the project has resulted in so much more.

It has highlighted that this innovative way of working benefits not only children, teachers and museum educators, but also parents and, potentially, the wider community. A major bonus has been seeing the children's growing sense of ownership towards their local cultural spaces. Their feeling that these spaces are theirs could help to build community cohesion, especially if they share their enthusiasm with families, friends and neighbours.

We saw that for the children a key success factor was the combination of the intensity of the experience, the length of exposure to a rich cultural environment, and the strong elements of child-led learning. With greater training and further investment, teachers and museums could make even more use of these opportunities, leading to greater impacts on the children's development and wider benefits for all.

The concept's potential is reflected in the learning taken from the first residency in the Swansea partnership, which was passed on to the second, allowing the school and museum to build on their experiences and good practice to excellent effect.

In fact, all the partners – and the project team – have been on a steep learning curve. This experiment has highlighted the importance of managing the merger of very different cultures, for example. Simply placing two organisations together is not enough. We need to do more work to ensure they sit comfortably together and work collaboratively.

We've also had to overcome some hurdles, not least the usual financial pressures and a risk-averse climate. But the partnerships show that with careful planning, evidence-based advocacy and investment, none of these are insurmountable.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of all of the project's teachers and museum staff, we now have strong evidence that a new hybrid educational experience is possible. By generating closer relationships between schools and museums, between children – including very young children – and local cultural resources, and between local institutions and families, we can enrich learning and build community cohesion.

There could be a whole host of exciting partnerships on your doorstep that you've never dreamt of. We want to inspire schools and museums across the UK and hope that *My Primary School is at the Museum* will provide you with ideas about how these partnerships can be realised.

**A key success factor was the combination of the intensity of the experience, the length of exposure to a rich cultural environment, and the strong elements of child-led learning.”**



# School-museum collaborations

**T**his appendix brings together information about a number of schools in the UK and internationally that have used museums as a backdrop for learning.

**Langley Academy, Slough (UK)**  
The UK's only Museum Specialist School: established in 2008 and sponsored by the Arbib Foundation. Learning in museum and gallery contexts is integrated into the curriculum across all subjects, and coordinated through a Museum Learning Manager. The school hosts temporary exhibitions curated by students. Partner museums provide locations for teaching. The Langley Academy views museums as gateways to real things, real stories and real people and utilises collections to make learning meaningful and memorable.  
<http://www.langleyacademy.org/>

**Cheney School, Oxford (UK)**  
A large comprehensive school working towards Arts Council Museum Accreditation for museum specialism. Cheney School hosts the East Oxford Community Classics Centre (EOCCC). Established in 2013 and run by The Iris Project in association with the University of Oxford's Faculty of Classics, it offers events, workshops, lessons and exhibitions for all ages. Pupils participate in a range of enrichment and project activities at the Centre; learning about its artefacts is embedded into classes. The EOCCC also trains Cheney staff and students in how to curate the Centre's collections. <http://eoccc.org.uk/museum> and <http://www.cheney.oxon.sch.uk/Museum-Accreditation-at-Cheney-School>

**Eureka Children's Museum, Halifax (UK)**  
Established in 2003, Eureka Children's Museum also hosts a nursery school (0-5

years). Children participate in weekly small group visits to the museum where they undertake art and crafts activities and workshops. As well as a park, classroom, theatre, and other interactive galleries, the museum has two specific galleries for under 5s. It also provides holiday childcare (5-14 years), with arts and crafts workshops, forest school and community activities. <https://www.eureka.org.uk/eureka-nursery-childcare/>

**WAC Arts Free School (formerly Weekend Arts College), London (UK)**  
One of only 16 alternative Free Schools in the UK, unlike the museum schools WAC is an established participatory arts organisation which also runs a school, rather than an educational organisation with a museum collection or arts programme. It delivers cutting edge performing arts and media provisions to young people aged 14-19 years who are failing to thrive within mainstream education. <https://www.wacarts.co.uk/homepage/wac-arts-freeschool-survey>

**Museum Magnet Schools, Washington, DC (US)**  
A group of several public elementary schools in which students spend as much time exploring local museums as they do in the classroom. One example is Brent Elementary, which has a Museum and Field Studies programme that uses Washington's museums to make history, science, literature and the arts come alive. Students interact with museum artefacts and have opportunities to create their own exhibits and performances. Each year a different school-wide theme

is integrated into the curriculum to create common links between different classes. <http://www.brentelementary.org/our-school>

**New York City Museum School, New York (US)**  
An award-winning museum learning-based high school (14-18 years) established in 1993 and consistently ranked among the city's top schools. The school utilises the rich resources of the city's historic, artistic, scientific and cultural institutions to supplement the Common Core Curriculum, reinforced by specialised courses in partner museums and cultural institutions and weekly museum visits. The school believes that engagement with primary resources improves students' understanding of the value of history, language, science and mathematics in everyday life. <http://www.nycmuseumschool.org>

**Bank Street College of Education, New York (US)**  
Offers graduate programmes in Museum Education, and Leadership in Museum Education, which train students to be museum education specialists for children and schools, and classroom teachers with specialist skills in integrating museums into the classroom. Students carry out fieldwork in the Bank Street School for Children (6 months-14 years), located within the college. The school's teaching is diverse and 'real-world' focused, integrating learning about and in museums and libraries into the curriculum. <https://www.bankstreet.edu>



#### **Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC (US)**

The Smithsonian runs the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Centre (SEEC) – an on-site programme for 0-6 years. Established over 25 years ago, it aims to engage students in meaningful museum experiences based upon educational strategies and techniques. Children at SEEC interact directly with scientists, artists and cultural historians through class visits to Smithsonian museums and research centres. SEEC enables children to gain an understanding of global society and exposes them early to art, history and science. <https://www.si.edu/SEEC>

#### **The Museum School of Avondale Estates, Georgia (US)**

Established in 2010, this public charter elementary and middle school was the product of a grassroots effort by parents to create an innovative education experience. The pupils have monthly visits to a number of learning and cultural institution partners; partner institutions also work with pupils to acquire feedback on projects or programmes in development. The school hosts exhibition evenings to showcase children's work and teach them how to effectively explain and discuss their learning and ideas. <http://themuseumschool.org/welcome/history/>

#### **Normal Park Museum Magnet School, Tennessee (US)**

An award-winning elementary and middle school established in 2002 and housed in two historic buildings with innovative learning features (eg an

edible garden, displays by local artists, and a growing adventure playground). Their mission is to instil lifelong intellectual curiosity, sound judgement and deep understanding by building a solid educational foundation based on meaningful exploration and discovery. The school partners with a variety of local cultural and educational institutions for off-site learning and itself runs hands-on activities for pupils. [www.normalpark.com](http://www.normalpark.com)

#### **School in the Park, San Diego (US)**

A multi-visit museum programme for elementary and middle school students at two local schools. The classroom curriculum is integrated with a programme that blends formal and informal learning using the resources of museums and other institutions in Balboa Park. School in the Park moves the school out into the wider community and seeks to encourage civic and social engagement, enhance self-esteem and self-confidence, and develop academic excellence. <http://schoolinthepark.net/about-sitp/>

#### **The Museum School, San Diego (US)**

A tuition-free, public charter school for elementary and middle school students. It opened in 1998 as a partnership between the San Diego Unified School District and The Children's Museum but now operates independently. Arts are infused into the basic curriculum, which is supplemented with skills in 'learning to learn', supported by community goals of becoming responsible citizens, productive workers, creative healthy individuals, problem solvers and

self-directed learners. The school is partnered with a number of local educational and cultural institutions for external learning opportunities. <http://74.220.219.147/~museumsc/>

#### **The Museum School, Bhopal (India)**

Established by the Organisation for Awareness of Integrated Social Security (OASIS), this Museum School takes advantage of the fact that cities with a high number of slum children not in education also have a high number of museums and similar institutions. The School collaborates with local museums to make them an educational setting for slum children let down and disenchanted by the traditional education system, teaching them enough so that they might return to mainstream schooling. The school collaborates with museums in Bhopal, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore, which are the sole classroom environment, their exhibits forming the basis of students' learning. The curriculum covers behavioural changes, literacy, physical and adolescence education, vocational skills and entrepreneurship development. <http://parvarish.weebly.com/>

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